

The Sixty-second season of
THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2487th Concert

VIENNA PIANO TRIO

WOLFGANG REDIK, *violin*
MATTHIAS GREDLER, *cello*
STEFAN MENDEL, *piano*

Sunday Evening, 29 February 2004
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Joseph Haydn
(1732–1809)

Piano Trio in A Major
Hob. XV/18 (1794)

Allegro moderato
Andante
Allegro

Arnold Schoenberg
(1874–1951)

Verklärte Nacht
Op. 4 (1899)

Arranged for piano trio by Edward Steuermann

Allegro
Adagio
Molto presto

Intermission

Franz Schubert
(1840–1893)

Piano Trio in B-flat Major
Op. 99, D. 898 (c. 1828)

Allegro
Andante un poco mosso
Scherzo: Allegro
Rondo: Allegro vivace

*The use of cameras or recording equipment during
the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell
phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.*

The Musicians

Founded in 1988, the **Vienna Piano Trio** has achieved a “meteoric rise to fame” (*The Strad*), and has been hailed as one of the “world’s leading ensembles of piano, violin, and cello” (*The Washington Post*). The trio has won numerous prizes at international competitions, and its members have studied with the Trio di Trieste, the Haydn Trio Wien, members of the La Salle and Guarneri Quartets and the Beaux Arts Trio, Isaac Stern, Jaime Laredo, and Ralph Kirshbaum. At the famed Vienna Musikverein, the Vienna Piano Trio played the world premiere of a triple concerto written for the ensemble by the Austrian composer Christoph Cech. The same venue is the setting for the trio’s current four-concert series. Recent touring has taken the group to England’s BBC Manchester and Wigmore Halls, Germany’s Beethoventage Bonn, and important venues in Japan, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand.

After two Brahms recordings on the Naxos label, the Vienna Piano Trio went on to record exclusively under the Nimbus label. The recordings (trios by Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Dvořák, Schnittke, Shostakovich, and Mozart) have won many awards, including the Top of the Class award in 1999 from the British magazine *Classic CDs* and the *London Times*’ Classical Album of the Year Award in 2000. In addition to its concert activities, the Vienna Piano Trio gives master classes at many well-known music institutions, including the Royal College of Music in London, the Sydney Conservatory of Music, and the Helsinki Music Conservatory. Violinist Wolfgang Redik plays a J. B. Guadagnini violin from 1772, on loan from the Austrian National Bank. The Vienna Piano Trio appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Shupp Artists of Port Jefferson, New York.

Program Notes

One of the most delightful chamber works of Joseph Haydn is his *Piano Trio No. 18 in A Major, Hoboken XV/18*. The first movement (*Allegro moderato*) reveals Haydn’s innate gift for colorful modulatory sequences. The second movement (*Andante*), with its robust contrast between the

tonic major and tonic minor, provides the listener with melodic colorations. The finale (*Allegro*) is a rambunctious rondo that captivates listeners at every performance. The Haydnesque chirps and animation make it a favorite encore, particularly in programs performed by the Beaux Arts Trio.

In its original 1899 version, Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* (*Transfigured Night*) is scored for string sextet. Written when the composer was age twenty-five, Schoenberg's sextet is considered his first true masterpiece. It was given its world premiere on 18 March 1902 in Vienna by the Rose Quartet with selected members of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Initially, the work was viewed with suspicion and apprehension, due in no small measure to its unfamiliar sound in the ears of listeners accustomed to hearing works for the same instrumentation from Brahms and Dvořák. In the one hundred-two years since its introduction to the public, *Verklärte Nacht* has consistently been Schoenberg's most beloved composition and has evolved out of the category of "modern" music. Its genesis was a poem of the same name by Richard Dehmel (1863–1920). In one continuous movement, the work mirrors the peculiar form dictated by the layout of the poem. In the preface to the 1979 edition of the score, this form is analyzed as "an introduction, two distinct and contrasting movements, a coda, and an apotheosis."

Schoenberg completed *Verklärte Nacht* in only three weeks. In 1917 he expanded the original scoring (two violins, two violas, and two cellos) to full string orchestra, and in 1943 he revised it once again. The version for piano trio is the work of Edward Steuermann, a close friend and associate of Schoenberg, who was entrusted with the premiere performances of all of Schoenberg's works that involve the piano. The 1979 edition includes an account of the impetus for this arrangement: "The present setting of Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* was made by Steuermann in 1932 as a birthday gift for Mrs. Alice Moller, a wealthy Viennese lady who studied with Schoenberg and Steuermann and made her home a haven for musicians of that circle."

Schubert's *Piano Trio No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 99*, was first recognized as a masterwork by Robert Schumann and has taken its place as one of the former composer's most admired chamber music compositions. The first movement (*Allegro moderato*) is sunny and spirited, expressing the state of self-confidence, albeit ephemeral, that Schubert experienced during the last two years of his life. After the initial announcement of the opening theme, several key changes occur before the entrance of the second theme, and a number of other key changes are undertaken before the end of the movement. Each key change can be seen to bring about an elevated degree of happiness. The German-American musicologist Alfred Einstein (1880–1952), a cousin of the famous physicist Albert Einstein, hears in the first movement of the trio Schubert's song, *Des Sängers Habe*, D. 832. In it the poet cries out, "Take from me all my worldly wealth and shatter all my happiness, yet leave me my zither and still I shall be happy and rich." After a two-bar piano introduction, the second movement (*Andante un poco mosso*) is ushered in by a lyrical theme played on the cello, followed a few bars later by the violin over a counter theme by the cello. Schumann likened this movement to "a happy dream, a throbbing flow of exquisitely human emotion." The third movement (*Scherzo: Allegro*) relates to but does not overtly imitate an Austrian contra dance. The fourth movement (*Rondo: Allegro vivace*) paraphrases another song of Schubert, according to Einstein. The song is entitled *Skolie* (1815). Its words urge the listener to enjoy the short life of a flower before its sweet fragrance vanishes. The coda (*Presto*) presages the style of Rossini and evokes a joyful conclusion.

Program notes by Elmer Booze